

Literary Theory and Creative Writing, a Blended Space For Producing Literary Works

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Abstract

Literary theory is the systematic study of the nature of literature and of the method for analysing literary works. Literary Theory is an examination of a piece of literature which can be addressed to examine a single aspect of the work in its entirety. By literary theory we assume not to the meaning of work of literature but to the theories that reveal what literary works can mean. Moreover creative writing focuses on writing from emotions and thoughts which tends to be expressive, imaginative, and literary. Any writing refers to individual expression as a social practice falls to this category. It is believed that creative writing cannot be formed as an acquaintance outside literary theory instead of one that is fashioned within. This paper looks at how creative writing and literary theory should be combined for producing fine-new literary works.

Keywords: *literary theory, creative writing, literature, literary works*

Introduction

Literary theory, sometimes called “secondary text” is the systematic study of the nature of literature and of the method for analyzing literature. By literary theory we refer not to the meaning of work of literature but to the theories that reveal what literature can mean. Literary theory or sometimes called literary analysis dealing with activity on evaluating, examining, critiquing any forms of literary works. It is conducted to comment and judge the quality of literary works as well as conveying the aspects of lives which authors intend to deliver through their works. For the past several decades critical theory has dominated the field of literary study. The role of critical analysis is to decipher what those works of literature might mean in a broader social, cognitive and cultural context.

Moreover, analysing the literary works make us deal with the textual elements of literature and contextual ones. Textual element or intrinsic elements are theme, characterization, setting, plot, symbolism, style and tone, and atmosphere. Contextual elements are theories for criticising literary works such as gender theory, psychological theory, deconstructionist, cultural studies, etc. Literary theory is an intellectual exercise and it is a natural human response to literature.

Producing literary works such as play, novel, poetry, short stories, etc are the features which categorized as Creative Writing genre. The purpose of Creative Writing is to guide, nurture, educate, and support developing writers for the purpose of producing fine-new literature. The analytical study of literature by means of critical theories provide historical background, philosophical rigor, a sociological framework and formalist knowledge that would enhance any creative writing course (Fenza, 2000). Creative writers and literary critics are two doers that would be often very creative in its creation. The above correlated facts lead the author a new notion that Literary Theory and Creative Writing should be combined to be a blended space for producing fine-new literary works.

To support the idea more, the activity of evaluating and criticizing literary works obviously will be dealing with the components of literature as its significance. In the US universities creative writing is a major, the department assigns the students taking many subjects on literature and its review as the requirements. The department believes that as a serious student of literature, it could teach them all that they needed to know about how writing gets produced. A creative writer to be must know a great deal about literature. Students must enrol in the modules where they read, study, and discuss poetry, drama, and fiction. To elaborate how is the application of literary theory is able to improve creative writing ability will be analysed through some elements; What is Literary Theory, What is Creative Writing, The Interconnection of Literary Theory and Creative Writing.

I. Literary Theory

Literary Theory is an examination of a piece of literature. The scope of the critique can be addressed to examine a single aspect of the work in its entirety. Barnett and Cain (2003) suggest, critical thinking on literature involves seeing an issue from all sides, to as great a degree

as possible. As you know, in ordinary language to criticize usually means to find fault, but in literary studies it does not have a negative connotation. Rather it means to examine carefully. The word criticism comes from a Greek verb meaning “to distinguish, to decide, to judge.” Nevertheless, since critical thinking requires you to take a skeptical view of your response. You will argue with yourself, seeing if your response can stand up to doubts. But what standard we should have for evaluating literature? Barnett and Cain (2003) imply some of the standards commonly set forth; Personal taste, Truth or realism, Moral content, Aesthetic qualities such as unity.

Since ancient times, readers have debated and critiqued the works of literature from a variety of perspectives. Some have looked at a piece of literature from a moral stance, considering how values are represented in a text. Another critique might evaluate it in terms of its form. Recent critics have looked at works of literature to see what it might be saying about our lives in society, our political or power relations, gender roles, or sexuality. Literary criticism seems not only to evaluate literary works or any kinds of artistic works, but it invites the literary critics exploring the shape of culture dealing with the context of the works. Therefore, to evaluating the works of literature, we need theory. Kennedy and Gioia (2002) imply the following are some theories that might consider when reading or writing (evaluating) about works of literature:

1. Formalism, New Criticism, Neo Aristotelian Criticism.
2. Biographical Criticism.
3. Historical Criticism.
4. Psychological Criticism.
5. Mythological Criticism.
6. Sociological Criticism.
7. Gender Criticism.
8. Reader-Response Criticism.
9. Deconstructionist Criticism.
10. Cultural Studies.

Those ten methods do not exhaust the total possibilities of literary criticism. They represent the most widely used contemporary approaches. Although, presented the approaches

separately, but they are not necessarily mutually exclusive. Many critics mix methods to suit their needs and interests. For example, a historical critic may use formalist technique to analyze a poem; a biographical critic will frequently use psychological theories to analyze an author. The purpose is to give us a practical introduction to each critical method and then provide representative example of it. For example; plays by Shakespeare are studied in their social and political context, especially in the view of the condition of their production, distribution, and consumption. Thus, Hamlet would be related to the economic and political system in England around 1600, and also to the context today, the educational system, the theatre industry, and so on. The works of literature and literary criticism are intermingled in their practices. Understanding on literary works would be in the highest set of valuing in the term of evaluating, elaborating, and putting the works settled by the context.

II. Creative Writing

The modern version of the discipline of creative writing begins in 1940 with the foundation of the Iowa's Writers Workshop.' The discipline can be seen partly as a reinvention of two great grainy wheels: ancient dramatic teaching and Renaissance rhetorical exercises in composition. Indeed, creative writing's tale begins in Athens, with Aristotle (384-322 BC)(Morley, 2007).

Later on, the word creative writing is defined in various ways. As conclusion, the following statements are some definition for this term: "The ability to create," "Imaginative," "Productive," "Characterized by expressiveness and originality" (Collins, 1994). Creative writing is writing that expresses ideas and thought in an imaginative way. The writers express their feelings and emotions instead of just presenting the fact. Therefore, it is not just solid writing skills that should required to be a great creative writer, but also the ability to use your life experiences, feelings, emotions, thoughts, opinions, imagination, and spirituality to create real visuals and attractive stories for the readers.

In details, there are some features that share as creative genre: poetry, short stories, novels (including westerns, romances, science fiction, detective stories, mysteries, fantasies, etc), stage play script, films and television screen play, and lyric. Other genres that are not include to

this type: magazine article, newspaper feature stories, essays, biographies, advertisements, card greetings, books or article on science history, etc. Creative writing requires the writers to dig deeply into their imagination, often connected with fictional character in an alternative reality. Creative writing comes from somewhere deep inside writer's thought and feeling; from a part of the mind and soul which we all have the ability to access.

III. The Interconnection of Literary Theory and Creative Writing.

By practicing the critical analysis on literary works, where you are exploring the use of narrative structure, literary technique, character development, dialogue, sequencing, pacing, in variety of ways let us have an opportunity to elaborate our ability in comprehending and applying literary elements for our literary producing. Executing literary works initially rised by reading the works in details (close-reading). Conducting a close-reading on literary works and taking them into parts to see what is going on in the story and what are things we can critisize to let them be more understandable in a broader context would be precious in our way to dig author's imagination, style, technique, and creativity in order to develop our own treasure in producing new-fine literary works.

Creative writing is not just for the artists and the dreamers, there are some principles of creative writing;

- a. Expert writers must first become expert readers
Students in creative writing classes must become aware of the basic technique of literary expression, including narative strategies, genre, and aesthetic.
- b. Creative writers must become more self-aware, craft conscious, and self-critical. The students must learn to revise. As important as learning how to write is the ability to evaluate and rewrite.
- c. Students must recognize that creative writing is never simply descriptive or imaginative. Creative writing also involves ideas, themes, questions, and arguments.

In Creative Writing modules, students would be given three things: first, the absolutely essential and luxurious opportunity to write, and to write a lot. Second, students would be taught

by professional writers. Third, students would read lots of literary magazine and books by contemporary writers so that they could absorb the voice of the time and place in which the author were living. Students need to know about literary history, how to analyze a work of literature, learn the tool and concepts of critical production and reception while reading primary and secondary texts or literary criticism (Ramey, 2001). In fact, there students should take modules in Creative Writing taught by a literature professor, not a writer.

At City College in New York, for instance, these are the goals for modules in Creative Writing offered as part of a degree in English:

1. To write with confidence in a specific literary mode.
2. To reflect upon writing as a process and be able to redraft work in response to group criticism.
3. Demonstrate an awareness of some literary conventions and stylistic devices.
4. Show some familiarity with the contemporary literary scene (Holland, 1999).

In order to achieve such goals of Creative Writing classes Ramey (2001) implies that modules should be based on a two-part pedagogy: the provision of literary models, and workshop to discuss students writing, often with a significant literary critical perspective on achievement and mastery. With this approach, students are encouraged to emulate various literary forms and techniques, accompanied by open discussion of their writing to assess their success in mastery.

Incorporating critical analysis on literary works and creative writing practices can be a blended space in our mind for improving our knowledge on literary elements; textual and contextual, language developing, sentence structure, and narrative devices which lead us to a more comprehend step to a new literary piece. Assignments focusing on criticizing literature piece are similar to writing creatively. We are assigned to dig our imagination on the works that we just read and rewrite the critics on them and finally we success to produce the piece of literary works after getting used to the literary matters. Indeed, Turner (1996) implies, “It was an unambiguous and inarguable reality that the creation of literature and its theoretical frame were inextricably bound together.” In creative writing class, they offer techniques to help students

overcome writer's block, hone skill of observation, description, and analysis; and cultivate a critical awareness of literary technique and craftsmanship.

The statements above prove that experts believe that literary criticism should have been applied inevitably in the notion of Creative Writing. Moreover Turner (1996) adds, "One of the great cognitive advantages of a blended space is its freedom to deal in all the vivid specifics of both its input spaces. This combination can powerfully activate both spaces and keep them easily active while we do cognitive work over them to construct meaning. Upon that circus of lively information, the mind can dwell and work to develop a projection." Blended space is the combination of literary criticism and creative writing. It can develop our mind to work on creating a new fine literary piece after conducting many critical essays on literary works. Furthermore, Parras (2005) implies that helping students be aware of such theoretical issues and contexts underlying the production and reception of writing will be able to; provide them with essential analytical skills they need to assess creative work. Give them a stronger foundation for understanding and responding to literary traditions, and sharpen the manner in which they approach the study and practice of writing.

Conclusion

The crucial difference is that Creative Writing does not produce written instances of literary criticism, it produces "literary texts" (poetry, short story, novel, play, etc). However, the texts are not just a "one step-producing." They are already a thoroughly critical process, inevitably there have been a deep involvement with range of literary criticism practices. Creative writing cannot be formed as an acquaintance outside literary theory instead of one that is fashioned within.. Therefore applying theories to literary works is considered having a bunch of benefit for creative writing in its application such as experience on literary components which will make us become literary-aware, having ability in getting involved in literary contextual, and bringing theories into literary works would be highly valuable for elaborating our creation on producing new fine literary works.

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